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U.S. vetoes U.N. resolution backed by many nations demanding immediate humanitarian cease-fire

By EDITH M. LEDERER
Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United States vetoed a United Nations resolution Friday backed by almost all other Security Council members and dozens of other nations demanding an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza. Supporters called it a terrible day and warned of more civilian deaths and destruction as the war goes into its third month. The vote in the 15-member council was 13-1, with the United Kingdom abstaining. The United States' isolated stand reflects a growing fracture between Washington and some of its closest allies over Israel's increasingly deadly bombardment of Gaza. France and Japan were among those supporting the resolution.



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Jordan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi speaks during a news conference about the Israel-Hamas war, and pressure to reduce civilian casualties, Friday, Dec. 8, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press



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U.S. vetoes U.N. resolution backed by many nations demanding immediate humanitarian cease-fire

Continued from Front

In a vain effort to press the Biden administration to drop its opposition to calling for a halt to the fighting, the foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey were all in Washington on Friday. But their meeting with Secretary of State Antony Blinken took place only after the U.N. vote.

The vote also shifted responsibility more squarely onto the United States for protecting Israel from growing demands to stop the airstrikes that are killing thousands of Palestinian civilians.

"What is the message we are sending Palestinians if we cannot unite behind a call to halt the relentless bombardment of Gaza?" United Arab Emirates deputy ambassador Mohamed Abushaha asked after the vote. "Indeed, what is the message we are sending civilians across the world who may find themselves in similar situations?"

U.S. deputy ambassador Robert Wood criticized the council after the vote for its failure to condemn Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel in which the militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, or to acknowledge Israel's right to defend itself. He declared that halting military action would allow Hamas to continue to rule Gaza and "only plant the seeds for the next war."

"Hamas has no desire to see a durable peace, to see a



Reporters raise their hands to ask questions as Foreign Ministers, from left, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Palestinian Minister of Foreign Affairs Riyad al-Maliki, Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, Jordan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi, and Egyptian Foreign Affairs Minister Sameh Shoukry, attend a news conference about the Israel-Hamas war, and pressure to reduce civilian casualties, Friday, Dec. 8, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

two-state solution," Wood said before the vote. "For that reason, while the United States strongly supports a durable peace, in which both Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace and security, we do not support calls for an immediate cease-fire." Israel's military campaign has killed more than 17,400 people in Gaza — 70% of them women and children — and wounded more than 46,000, according to the Palestinian territory's Health Ministry, which says many others are trapped under rubble. The ministry does not

differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths. Abushahab, the UAE diplomat, said before the vote that the resolution, which his country sponsored, had garnered nearly 100 co-sponsors in less than 24 hours, a reflection of global support for efforts to end the war and save Palestinian lives.

After the vote, he expressed deep disappointment at the U.S. veto and warned that the Security Council is growing isolated and "appears untethered" from its mandate to ensure international peace and security.

Russia's deputy U.N. ambassador Dmitry Polyansky called the vote "one of the darkest days in the history of the Middle East" and accused the United States of issuing "a death sentence to thousands, if not tens of thousands more civilians in Palestine and Israel, including women and children." He said "history will judge Washington's actions" in the face of what he called a "merciless Israeli bloodbath." The council called the emergency meeting to hear from Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who for the first

time invoked Article 99 of the U.N. Charter, which enables a U.N. chief to raise threats he sees to international peace and security. He warned of an "humanitarian catastrophe" in Gaza and urged the council to demand a humanitarian cease-fire.

Guterres said he raised Article 99 — which hadn't been used at the U.N. since 1971 — because "there is a high risk of the total collapse of the humanitarian support system in Gaza." The U.N. anticipates this would result in "a complete breakdown of public order and increased pressure for mass displacement into Egypt," he warned.

Gaza is at "a breaking point," he said, and desperate people are at serious risk of starvation.

Guterres said Hamas' brutality against Israelis on Oct. 7 "can never justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people."

"While indiscriminate rocket fire by Hamas into Israel, and the use of civilians as human shields, are in contravention of the laws of war, such conduct does not absolve Israel of its own violations," he stressed.

The U.N. chief detailed the "humanitarian nightmare" Gaza is facing, citing intense, widespread and ongoing Israeli attacks from air, land and sea that reportedly have hit 339 education facilities, 26 hospitals, 56 health care facilities, 88 mosques and three churches. □

Local New Hampshire newspaper publisher found guilty of political advertisement omissions

By KATHY McCORMACK

Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — A judge has found the New Hampshire publisher of a weekly community newspaper guilty of five misdemeanor charges that she ran advertisements for local races without properly marking them as political advertising.

The judge acquitted Debra Paul, publisher of the Londonderry Times, of a sixth misdemeanor charge on Thursday following a bench trial in November. She is scheduled to be sentenced on Dec. 20.

Each charge carries a maximum penalty of up to a year in jail and a \$2,000 fine.

The New Hampshire attorney general's office charged Paul last year, saying she failed to identify the ads with "appropriate language" indicating that they were ads and saying who paid for them as required by state law.

The office said it had warned her in 2019 and 2021. Last year, it received more complaints and reviewed the February and March issues of the paper. Two political ads leading up to a local election in March did not contain the "paid for" language and a third had no "politi-

cal advertisement" designation, according to a police affidavit.

Shortly after her arrest, the 64-year-old put out a statement saying "This is clearly a case of a small business needing to defend itself against overreaching government."

Her lawyer, Tony Naro, said at her trial that Paul never meant to break the law and tried to follow the attorney general's office instructions.

Naro said in an email Friday that while disappointed with the convictions, "we are considering all legal options moving forward" after Paul is sentenced. □

Michigan teen gets life in prison for Oxford High School attack

By ED WHITE and COREY WILLIAMS

Associated Press

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP) — A teenager was sentenced to life in prison Friday for killing four students, wounding more and terrorizing Michigan's Oxford High School in 2021.

A judge rejected pleas for a shorter sentence and ensured that Ethan Crumbley, 17, will not get an opportunity for parole.

Life sentences for teenagers are rare in Michigan since the U.S. Supreme Court and the state's highest court said the violent acts of minors must be viewed differently than the crimes of adults.

Judge Kwame Rowe's decision followed anguished remarks by families of the deceased and survivors who spoke about how the tragedy has affected them.

"Your statements," Rowe said, "do not fall on deaf ears."

Crumbley, who was 15 at the time of the shooting, pleaded guilty to 24 charges, including first-degree murder and terrorism.



Ethan Crumbley sits in court listening to victim impact statements, Friday, Dec. 8, 2023, in Pontiac, Mich.

"We are miserable. We miss Tate," said Buck Myre, the father of Tate Myre. "Our family has a permanent hole in it that can never be fixed ever."

Nicole Beausoleil recalled seeing the body of her daughter, Madisyn Baldwin, at the medical examiner's office, her hand with

blue-painted fingernails sticking out from a covering.

"I looked through the glass. My scream should have shattered it," Beausoleil said.

Jill Soave, the mother of Justin Shilling, told the shooter that he executed a boy who could have

helped him navigate awkward teenage years.

"If you were that lonely, that miserable and lost, and you really needed a friend, Justin would have been your friend if only you had asked," Soave said.

Crumbley, who was 15 at the time of the shooting, looked down as Soave and

Associated Press

others spoke. He also will have an opportunity to address the judge and possibly explain why he believes he should be spared a life sentence.

Kylie Ossege explained how she had urged Hana St. Juliana a "thousand times" to keep breathing while they waited for help on a blood-soaked carpet. Her classmate died.

Ossege, now a college student, was shot and continues to struggle with daily pain from spinal injuries.

"Being able to swing a leg over my horse is my therapy. It is pure joy," she said of Blaze. "I have not been able to do it for two years." Defense attorney Paulette Michel Loftin has argued Crumbley deserves an opportunity for parole after his "sick brain" is fixed through counseling and rehabilitation.

But St. Juliana's father scoffed at that possibility.

"There can be no rehabilitation," Steve St. Juliana told the judge. "There is absolutely nothing the defendant can do to earn my forgiveness." □

Migrant families wade through shallow waters toward Roma, Texas, March 24, 2021.

Associated Press

By ELLIOT SPAGAT

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A federal judge was poised Friday to prohibit separation of families at the border for purposes of deterring immigration for eight years,

preemptively blocking resumption of a lightning-rod, Trump-era policy that the former president hasn't ruled out if voters return him to the White House next year. U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw tentatively approved a court settle-

ment in October between the Justice Department and families represented by the American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLU says no one formally objected, clearing the way to end the case nearly seven years after it was filed.

Sabraw, who was appointed by President George W. Bush, ordered an end to separations in June 2018, six days after then-President Donald Trump halted them on his own amid intense international backlash. The judge also ordered that the government reunite children with their parents within 30 days, setting off a mad scramble because government databases weren't linked. Children had been dispersed to shelters across the country

that didn't know who their parents were or how to find them.

Under the proposed settlement, the type of "zero-tolerance" policy under which the Trump administration separated more than 5,000 children from parents who were arrested for illegally entering the country would be prohibited until December 2031.

Children may still be separated but under limited circumstances, as has been the case for years. They include if the child is believed to be abused, if the parent is convicted of serious crimes or if there are doubts that the adult is the parent.

Families that were separated may be eligible for other benefits legal status for up

to three years on humanitarian parole; reunification in the United States at government expense; one year of housing; three years of counseling; legal aid in immigration court. But the settlement doesn't pay families any money. In 2021, the Biden administration considered compensating parents and children hundreds of thousands of dollars each, but talks stalled. As he seeks to return to the White House in next year's elections, Trump has been noncommittal whether he would try to resume family separations. He defended the results in an interview with Univision last month, claiming without evidence that it "stopped people from coming by the hundreds of thousands." □



Migrant families wade through shallow waters toward Roma, Texas, March 24, 2021.

Associated Press

Pregnant woman in Kentucky sues for the right to get an abortion

By **BRUCE SCHREINER** and **KIMBERLEE KRUESI**
Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — A pregnant woman in Kentucky filed a lawsuit Friday demanding the right to an abortion, the second legal challenge in days to sweeping abortion bans that have taken hold in more than a dozen U.S. states since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned last year.

The suit, filed in state court in Louisville, says Kentucky's near-total prohibition of abortion violates the plaintiff's rights to privacy and self-determination under the state constitution.

The plaintiff, identified as Jane Doe, is about eight weeks pregnant and she wants to have an abortion in Kentucky but cannot legally do so because of the state's ban, the suit said. She is seeking class-action status to include other Kentuckians who are or will become pregnant and want to have an abortion.

"I am a proud Kentuckian and I love the life my family and I have here, but I'm



Abortion-rights supporters chant their objections at the Kentucky Capitol, April 13, 2022, in Frankfort, Ky.

angry that now that I'm pregnant and do not want to be," the plaintiff said in a statement released by the American Civil Liberties Union, one of the groups backing her challenge. "The government is interfering in my private matters and blocking me from

having an abortion. This is my decision, not the government or any other person's."

Republican state Attorney General Daniel Cameron's office said it is reviewing the suit but offered no other comments. Cameron's office has defended the

state's anti-abortion laws in other court proceedings. The filing in Kentucky comes a day after a judge in Texas gave a pregnant woman whose fetus has a fatal diagnosis permission to get an abortion. The temporary restraining order issued Thursday stops

Texas from enforcing the state's ban on the woman, who is 20 weeks pregnant, and lasts for 14 days. Her attorneys afterward spoke cautiously about any wider impacts, and Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton insisted that the order would not insulate any medical practitioners from any civil or criminal liability.

Unlike the case in Texas, little is known about the Kentucky plaintiff or her pregnancy.

Legal challenges currently taking place across the country have largely highlighted the stories from women who were denied abortions while facing harrowing pregnancy complications.

But in Kentucky, the plaintiff's attorneys insisted they would fiercely protect their client's privacy, stressing that Jane Doe believes "everyone should have the right to make decisions privately and make decisions for their own families," said Amber Duke, executive director for the ACLU of Kentucky. □

Associated Press

Massachusetts attorney general files civil rights lawsuit against white nationalist group

By **MICHAEL CASEY**
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Massachusetts' attorney general has filed a lawsuit accusing a white nationalist group of civil rights violations, saying it repeatedly subjected LG-BTQ+ events and facilities sheltering migrant families to intimidation and harassment.

The complaint filed Thursday against NSC-131 and two of its leaders, Christopher Hood of Newburyport and Liam McNeil of Waltham, accuses the group of engaging "in violent, threatening, and intimidating conduct that violated state civil rights laws and unlawfully interfered with public safety."

"NSC-131 has engaged in a concerted campaign to target and terrorize people

across Massachusetts and interfere with their rights. Our complaint is the first step in holding this neo-Nazi group and its leaders accountable for their unlawful actions against members of

our community," Attorney General Andrea Campbell said in a statement.

According to the complaint, the group repeatedly targeted drag story hours around the state be-



Andrea Campbell, Attorney General of Massachusetts, answers a question during an interview at the State Attorneys General Association meetings, Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023, in Boston.

Associated Press

tween July 2022 and January 2023, attempting to shut down the events and attacking members of the public. The group also targeted migrant shelters from October 2022 and October 2023, prosecutors allege. The Associated Press wasn't able to reach Hood or McNeil for comment about the lawsuit or determine if either has an attorney. A number listed for Hood had been disconnected and a number could not be found for McNeil. The group didn't immediately respond to messages sent through Gab and Telegram.

The Anti-Defamation League describes NSC-131 as a New England-based neo-Nazi group founded in 2019 that "espouses racism, antisemitism and

intolerance" and whose "membership is a collection of neo-Nazis and racist skinheads, many of whom have previous membership in other white supremacist groups."

Earlier this year, a New Hampshire judge dismissed trespassing complaints against the group. Prosecutors there said the group displayed "Keep New England White" banners from an overpass without a permit in July.

In March 2022, about a dozen masked members of NSC-131 attended South Boston's St. Patrick's Day parade as spectators and held up a banner that said "Keep Boston Irish."

The parade's organizers and Mayor Michelle Wu denounced the group's appearance. □

A rocket attack targets the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, causing minor damage but no casualties

BY QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA

Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — A rocket attack on the sprawling U.S. Embassy in Baghdad caused minor damage but no casualties Friday morning, U.S. and Iraqi officials said.

The attack was the first on the embassy located in the heavily fortified Green Zone of Iraq's capital to be confirmed since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war. The Green Zone houses Iraqi government buildings and foreign embassies on the west bank of the Tigris River.

Friday's assault was followed by drone and multi-rocket attacks, including on al-Asad air base in Iraq and three troop locations in Syria, also with no casualties, U.S. officials said.

Iran-backed militias in Iraq have claimed responsibility for dozens of attacks that targeted bases housing U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria since Israel declared war on Hamas two months ago. The U.S. military says 78 attacks have been carried out against U.S. facili-



The U.S. Embassy is seen from across the Tigris River in Baghdad, Iraq, on Jan. 3, 2020.

Associated Press

ties over the past weeks, of which 43 were in Iraq and 41 in Syria.

An Iraqi security official said 14 Katyusha rockets were fired Friday, of which some struck near one of the U.S. Embassy's gates while others fell in the river.

A U.S. military official said a multi-rocket attack was

launched at American and coalition forces in the vicinity of the embassy complex and the Union III base, which houses offices of the U.S.-led coalition. The official added that no casualties and no damage to infrastructure were reported.

An embassy spokesperson said the U.S. Embassy was

attacked by two salvos of rockets at about 4:15 a.m. (0215 GMT).

"Assessments are ongoing, but there are no reported casualties on the embassy compound," the official said, adding that no specific group had claimed responsibility for firing the rockets as of Friday morn-

ing. But early indications pointed to Iran-aligned militias.

"We again call on the government of Iraq, as we have done on many occasions, to do all in its power to protect diplomatic and Coalition partner personnel and facilities," the official said. "We reiterate that we reserve the right to self-defense and to protect our personnel anywhere in the world."

The three officials spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said in a statement that "targeting diplomatic missions is something that cannot be justified." He called the attack an "insult to Iraq, its stability and security," and promised to "pursue the perpetrators of the attack ... and bring them to justice."

Sudani came to power with the support of a coalition of Iran-backed parties. But he also wants continued good relations with the U.S. and has backed the ongoing presence of American troops in his country. □

Indonesia suspects human trafficking is behind the increasing number of Rohingya refugees

By EDNA TARIGAN and RAHMAT MIRZA

Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)

— Indonesia's government blames a surge in human trafficking for the increasing number of Rohingya Muslims that have entered the country over the past few weeks, the Indonesian president said Friday.

President Joko Widodo said in a televised news conference that he received "reports about the increasing number of Rohingya refugees entering Indonesian territory, especially Aceh Province."

"There are strong suspicions that there is involvement of a criminal human trafficking network in this flow of

refugees," he said, adding that the "government will take firm action against perpetrators of human traf-

ficking."

Police said they arrested three Aceh residents for human trafficking on Fri-



Police officers escort suspected human traffickers who were arrested, at the local police headquarters, in Lhokseumawe, Aceh province, Indonesia, Friday, Dec. 8, 2023.

Associated Press

day. They are suspected of helping 30 Rohingya refugees leave their camp in the city of Lhokseumawe. The suspects were given 1.8 million rupiah (\$115) to smuggle the refugees from the camp to the city of Medan in North Sumatra province, said Henki Ismanto, the Lhokseumawe police chief.

Since August 2017, about 740,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled Buddhist-majority Myanmar to camps in Bangladesh, following a brutal counterinsurgency campaign. Myanmar security forces have been accused of mass rapes, killings and the burning of thousands of Rohingya homes, and international courts are consid-

ering whether their actions constituted genocide.

Most of the refugees leaving by sea attempt to reach Muslim-dominated Malaysia, hoping to find work there. Thailand turns them away or detains them. Indonesia, another Muslim-dominated country where many end up, also puts them in detention.

Since November, more than 1,000 Rohingya refugees have arrived by boat in Indonesia's northernmost province of Aceh.

The latest arrivals, a group of 139 refugees, including women and children, landed on Sunday, followed by protest from local residents who demanded they be relocated. □

Scottish court upholds UK decision to block Scotland's landmark gender-recognition bill

By **DANICA KIRKA**

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Scotland's highest civil court on Friday upheld the British government's move to block a landmark gender-recognition law passed by the Scottish parliament, underscoring the growing divide over local control of legislation in the nations of the United Kingdom.

The ruling by the Court of Session in Edinburgh is a setback for Scotland's semi-autonomous government, which overwhelmingly approved a bill allowing anyone 16 or older to change the gender designation on their identity documents by self-declaration, removing the need for a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria.

The legislation set Scotland apart from the rest of the U.K., where the minimum age is 18 and a medical diagnosis is required.

Britain's central government blocked the law, invoking for the first time a section of the 25-year-old act that gave the Scottish parliament control over most of its own affairs. Section 35 gives U.K. authorities



The flags of Britain, Scotland and European Union wave outside the Scottish parliament in Edinburgh, Friday, Jan. 31, 2020.

the power to prevent the implementation of measures that interfere with matters reserved to the central government.

The decision highlights the tensions inherent within constitutional arrangements that cede authority over many areas of daily life to the "devolved" administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ire-

land, while reserving control over national issues and those concerning England for the U.K. government in Westminster.

Frustration with the U.K.'s continued role in Scotland has fueled the country's independence movement. Scotland's parliament, based in the Holyrood area of Edinburgh, is controlled by the pro-independence

Scottish National Party.

"Today's judgment confirms beyond doubt that devolution is fundamentally flawed," Scottish First Minister Humza Yousaf said in a post on X, formerly Twitter. "The court has confirmed that legislation passed by a majority in Holyrood can be struck down by Westminster."

Yousaf said he would none-

theless respect the judgment.

The confrontation began earlier this year when Scottish lawmakers overwhelmingly approved the gender recognition bill by a vote of 86-39.

But the U.K. government prevented the bill from receiving royal assent the final formality before legislation becomes a law. Scotland Secretary Alister Jack said at the time that he was concerned the bill conflicted with "Great Britain-wide equalities legislation" that guarantees women and girls access to single-sex spaces such as changing rooms and shelters.

Scottish officials challenged the central government's actions, arguing that they interfered with Scotland's right to govern itself.

The Court of Session disagreed.

"Section 35 does not, in and of itself, impact on the separation of powers or other fundamental constitutional principle," Judge Shona Haldane said in her ruling.

"Rather it is itself part of the constitutional framework." □

Associated Press

Advocates say a Mexican startup is illegally selling a health drink from an endangered fish

By **DANIEL SHAILER**

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Environmental watchdogs accused a Mexico-based startup Thursday of violating international trade law by selling a health supplement made from endangered totoaba fish to several countries including the U.S. and China.

Advocates told The Associated Press they also have concerns that the company, The Blue Formula, could be selling fish that is illegally caught in the wild.

The product, which the company describes as "nature's best kept secret,"

is a small sachet of powder containing collagen taken from the fish that is designed to be mixed into a drink.

Under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, to which Mexico and the U.S. are both signatories, any export for sale of totoaba fish is illegal, unless bred in captivity with a particular permit. As a listed protected species, commercial import is also illegal under U.S. trade law. The environmental watchdog group Cetacean Action Treasury first cited the company in November.

Then on Thursday, a coalition of environmental charities The Center for Biological Diversity, National Resources Defense Council and Animal Welfare Institute filed a written complaint to CITES.

The Blue Formula did not immediately respond to an AP request for comment. The company claims on its website to operate "100%" sustainably by sourcing fish from Cygnus Ocean, a farm which has a permit to breed totoaba, and using a portion of their profits to release some farmed fish back into the wild.

However, Cygnus Ocean

does not have a permit for commercial export of their farmed fish, according to the environmental

groups. The farm also did not immediately respond to a request from the AP for comment. □



This undated file photo provided by The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shows a vaquita porpoise. Associated Press

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Noord – Sometimes all we need is one place where we can do all our shopping at once. Well, Do it center and Super Do it Center Groceries has it all. This is the largest, local owned Do it Center in the Caribbean and best of all a 100% locally owned family business.

How it all began

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As the saying goes: "Behind every successful man, is a strong woman". In the case of Ponson, this was no different. As General Store progressed and slowly became successful, Mrs. Irene Ponson, came in to assist her husband. Irene Ponson is a visionary, she knew exactly where and how to invest and within a short amount of time in 1970, General Store moved to a better location at the Steenweg. This allowed for a lot more merchandise, products and employees. Supply and demand was as such, that General Store became the number 1 electrical business. Business kept going so well that the location at the Steenweg became too small and was moved later to Dakota Shopping Paradise and later to Pedro Gallego Straat. With this move, an expansion was decided upon and an electronics store in Savaneta was opened. General Store still being very successful was ready for more growth.

Ricky, Kenneth, Corine and Frans are the fruits of this marriage. Kenneth and Frans however, decided to further develop their father's legacy and continued with their mother's dream to expand the business. An expansion not in square feet only, but in merchandise as well. A great opportunity presented itself when the Ponson family was able to buy a piece of property across from the airport. In 2007 the Ponson family moved into their brand new and huge building. Ponson's General Store now had an electrical department, as housewares department, a paint department and a hardware department.

After a successful opening and expansion,



Kenneth and Frans who inherited their mother's vision, decided that General Store was ready for yet another expansion. With the support of Mr. Tom Barfell and management of Do it Best in the States, the construction of Do it Center commenced.

Fast forward to today. A Do it Center in Aruba, with more than 50.000 top of the line items for interior as well exterior use, building materials, STO products and a top of the line grocery store. Perseverance, responsibility, vision and the courage to invest have made Ponson's General Store as successful as it is today.

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Located in Shaba, Noord. This is the last sibling of the Do It Center family. Here you will be able to find anything you are looking for. The building is divided into several departments from home to hardware to groceries. Everything under one roof.

Groceries? Visit the fully stocked supermarket with fresh fruits and vegetables and high class meat selections. Highly known products and brands are here for you to grab. Every week

Do It Center Groceries offers its weekly special on selected items. Weekly specials are very popular and a perfect chance for you to buy your favorite products at a reduced price.

Need a home makeover? Do not skip the furniture department "Leenbakker". Here, you will find a divine collection of European furniture, worldwide known for their modern and stylish features for your bedroom, bathroom, living room or kitchen. For your garden they have a wide selection of durable furniture specially made for our tropical climate. Take a walk around and find some treasures. Find the perfect accessory for your house, fitted for your personality and style. Modern, elegant, retro industrial, whatever your style is you will definitely find something for your personal taste.

Do it Center Shaba is open from Monday to Saturday from 8AM to 8PM and on Sunday's from 9AM to 6PM.

For more information go to www.doit.aw.



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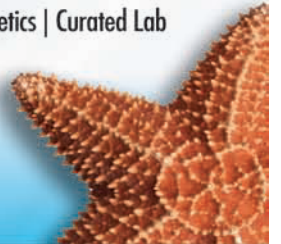
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Aruba Tourism Authority honors loyal visitors at Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort!



The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure to recognize Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. These Distinguished Visitors were respectively honored with certificates acknowledging their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who

have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Distinguished Visitors

Mr. Michael & Mrs. Carmela Kruzynski from New York, United States.

Distinguished Visitors

Mr. Stephen & Mrs. Tina Kenny from Virginia, United States.

Ms. Kimberley Richardson representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort bestowed the Distinguished Visitor certificates to the honorees, presented them with gifts, and also thanked them

for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba, provided by Mr. & Mrs. Kruzynski were:

- Aruba's beautiful beaches.
- Aruba's great weather.
- "Direct flight from the U.S."
- Aruba's variety of restaurants to choose from.
- Aruba's friendly people.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba, provided by Mr. & Mrs. Kenny were:

- Aruba's relaxing atmosphere.
- Aruba's warm weather.
- Aruba's friendly people.
- Aruba's food.
- Aruba's cleanliness and safety.

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □

Aruba's Nature is to be Cherished

ST. CRUZ — The national park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There is numerous wildlife to discover like for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches. There are more places on the island that are a preserved area like the Bubali Plas which is a bird sanctuary.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours.

A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the in total seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches. A very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling sur-

face sand before emerging.

Bubali Magic

This beautiful close-up image of the pink bird is courtesy of Michiel Oversteegen of the Aruba Birdlife Conservation. This important foundation showcases and builds awareness of Aruba's birds and other native flora and fauna. You may have seen a 'pink cloud' lately at the Bubali or Spanish Lagoon Wetlands areas? It's most likely to be Roseate Spoonbills (*Ajaia ajaja*) or 'Chucharon Cora' as they are known in Papiamentu. This unusual looking bird forages in shallow muddy water while sweeping its flattened bill from side to side to catch small fish, crustaceans and other aquatic

invertebrates. The Roseate Spoonbill remains an uncommon sight as they are vulnerable to degradation of feeding and nesting habitats (Wetlands). (Source: arikok national park) The aforementioned is just a part of what Aruba's nature has to offer. We cannot stress enough to go, see for yourself. The island has the most beautiful beaches but it is also worthwhile to go beyond this and get an idea of our entire island. Lately there is a discussion going on about the effect certain activities have on our nature, for example the ATV vehicles cause a lot of dust, noise and leave tire tracks. Animals live in these areas where the vehicles run, often with high speed



and with detrimental consequences to flora and fauna. Motorized vehicles are forbidden to drive on the sand dunes in the Northern part of the island and all beaches in Aruba are forbidden for any motorized vehicle. Treasure our island to enjoy it like you do: as a tropical and natural paradise. We truly appreciate it! □

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Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submit-

ting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation. Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.



For today we received a lovely message from Elaine Dell'Orfano and the Boston gang.

They wrote to us saying: "We have been coming to this happy island for 18 years. We love the love we

receive from the Aruban people!! The food is great, weather perfect we can drink the water. Great accommodations and welcomes from everyone. It means friendships never disappear. It's so nice to hear your name when we

arrive. It's home away from home!! Thank you for embracing us with your love."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □

Create museum memories

ORANJESTAD — Museums are an integral part of conserving and honoring cultures, and Aruba is no exception. Our Island has a wide selection of various museums for our locals and visitors to see. Take this opportunity to learn about our island and experience a different day beyond the beach. Let us introduce to you these museums.

Museum of Industry Aruba

The Museum of Industry is located in San Nicolas—better known as the art capital of Aruba. This museum exhibits the industrial history of gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and tourism through elaborated displays and multimedia installations.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history, which began in the 19th century. The Water Tower was built in 1939 and consists of three sections: the substructure, the high-rising vertical shaft, and the tank at the top. The Water Tower was purchased by the Monuments Fund in 2003 so it can be restored and preserved

as one of Aruba's monuments. The Museum of Industry is part of Aruba Museum Foundation (Fundacion Museo Aruban), which is a foundation set to maintain, preserve, and protect the Aruban cultural sector, history, and nature. The museum of Industry is open daily from 9 am till 6 pm.

For more information, check out their Facebook page Museum of Industry Aruba.

Archaeological Museum of Aruba

The Archaeological Museum of Aruba is located at Schelpstraat 42 in downtown Oranjestad. The renovated historic Ecury complex in the area has been transformed from a family home to a modern museum that preserves Aruba's Amerindian cultural heritage. This 21st century museum is especially designed to preserve valuable artifacts dating back to the Pre-Ceramic period of 2500 BC.

In the late 1980's, AMA identified its need for an adequate housing for its collection and activities. After

studying various options, a project proposal was drawn up, including the acquisition and restoration of historical buildings in downtown Oranjestad.

These historical buildings were formerly the property of the Ecury family. The "Ecury Complex", is a cluster of single and two-story historic buildings, mainly Dutch colonial architecture from the late 19th and 20th century on a plot of approximately 1.700 m2.

In 1997, the Aruban Government bought the complex for the National Archaeological Museum project. In 2004, a financial agreement was signed with the European Development Fund and in 2006, restoration and construction work began on the monumental buildings and the soon-to-be exhibition space. In December 2007, the key to the complex was delivered and the museum's employees moved to the new location. The final design for the exhibit was completed

in November 2007 and the permanent exhibit, financed by the Aruban Government and the Union of Cultural Organizations (UNOCA), opened in July 2009.

At the new location, the National Archaeological Museum Aruba disposes of approximately 500 m2 for its permanent exhibit. This exhibit conveys information on the origin and culture of the first inhabitants of the island through archaeological objects and modern exhibition techniques. The new permanent exhibit gives the visitor an insight into the cultures that inhabited the island in Pre-Historical and Early Historical times. The museum also hosts attractive public programs, including lectures, educational projects, temporary exhibits and workshops.

The museum is open daily from 9:30 am till 4:30 pm. For more information check out the Facebook page Museo Arqueologico Nacional Aruba. □

LXXXIII - 83 The indigenous heritage of Aruba

ORANJESTAD — We as autochthon Arubans may have Dutch passport as well as a Dutch history however; we are Caquetios at heart, flesh and soul. We are still here; we are still being seen as a minority and are still the last to drink.

Aruban, autochthone Amerindians of the great Caquetio, were Indians as so called of Northwestern South American continent, today's Venezuela, living from along the shores of Lake Maracaibo, Falcon State and the ABC islands at the time of the Spanish conquest. They moved inland to avoid enslavement by the Spaniards but were eventually destroyed as a nation, as were their neighbors, the Quiriquire and the Jirajara. These Caquetios were also present in Aruba, Curaçao and Bonaire when these islands were first discovered by Alonso de Ojeda in 1499.

The Amerindians occupying this region were known as Caquetios by the Spaniards and their language (Caquetio) belongs to the Arawakan family of languages. The Caquetio and the Jirajara and Tainos



spoke a similar language, and their cultures were basically similar. The Arawakan or Caquetio language is termed a ghost or death language because a very few trace of it survives today in Spanish speaking of the Caribbean regions. In Papiamentu of Aruba you will find words, names of native plants and animals, body parts, troponins and sayings that remind us of ancient times and words that were saved

in 17th-century texts.

When the Spanish arrived in Aruba around 1500 they found the Caquetios in Aruba, living much as they did for centuries, as master farmers of corn, beans, squashes, yuca tubers and peanuts, skilled fishermen and potters. They were social and politically more organized than the hunters and gatherers living in earlier times here in the Stone Age.

Caquetios build large macacas that housed extended families. They were talented craftsmen in stone, wood, shells and ceramics. These Amerindians had probably migrated to Aruba, Curaçao and Bonaire in canoes made from hollowed out logs they used for fishing. Such crossings from the Paraguayan peninsula in Venezuela, across the 17 miles of open sea to Aruba, would be possible in the canoes built on the main land.

During the first years of colonization, natives of Aruba were described by the Spaniards as strong handsomely build while the women were beautiful with long black hair. The mainland Caquetios were geographically the closest tribe to Aruba, and archaeological evidence points towards close ties between both groups during pre-Columbian times. Perhaps as many as 800 Indians lived in Aruba at the time of the Spanish discovery in 1499. Together with Curaçao and Bonaire, Aruba was declared "islas inutiles" or useless island in

1513. Two years later some 2000 Caquetio Indians from the three islands combined were transported to Hispaniola to work in mines. These Indians presumably comprised the entire population of the islands, but however 150 to 200 were returned to Aruba and Curaçao in 1526 to work on the exportation of brazil wood, kwihi, and divi-divi. The origin of those returned to Aruba and Curaçao were mainly Caquetios, but some Arawaks speaking natives from other Caribbean islands were included in the group. The most likely scenario is that many of the natives descending of those who were brought back to Aruba from Hispaniola were from Aruba. This scenario is supported by the fact that some of these natives migrated to the mainland in 1723 to erect the town of El Carrizal, were described as a Caquetian or Arubas.

To get to know a little more regarding Aruba's and its cultural origins, etc. we highly recommend you to book your participation in our cultural encounter session. A mind opening revelation and entertaining island experience. Mail us at etnianativa03@gmail.com our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels. □



Article by: Etnia Nativa

Whatsapp us +297 592 2702 and book your Aruban experience

Etnia Nativa is close to the high rise hotels



Fruit Loose & Veggie Boost: Aruban fruits and vegetables

Fresh fruits make a tropical holiday's picture complete. Whether you see the mangoes hanging in the trees or the fresh fruit cocktail on the side table of your pool bed, the link is there: you are in the tropics. Aruba grows her own fruits and veggies and there are some pretty out-of-space local species you may never had heard of, but really healthy and delicious.

Mispel

This is a fruit with a character (5-10 cm/2-4 inches). It does not ripe until it is picked or falls off the tree. Mispel is hard with a sandpaper like texture when immature, soft and juicy when ripe. It's technically a berry, but contains a skin similar to that of a kiwi. It's grainy and sweet, with a light, musky flavor. The sap or gum from the tree is also a source of 'chicle' the original ingredient used to make chewing gum. Rich in tannins, antioxidants shown to contain anti-inflammatory compounds, and vitamin C, essential for healthy immune function. Season: year-round.

Kenepa



Ovoid green fruit that grows in bunches on trees up to 30m high. The fruit is related to the lychee and have tight, thin but rigid skins. Inside the skin is the tart, tangy, or sweet pulp of the fruit covering a large seed. The pulp is usually cream or orange colored. Kenepa strengthens the immune system, and prevents the reproduction of bacteria and viruses in the body. This fruit is highly recommended to treat lung infections and urinary tract infections. It also helps to cure insomnia and rejuvenates the nervous system. Season: the fruit typically ripen during the summer.

Druif



There is no chance you did not bump into one of the sea grape trees while spending your vacation on Aruba. The sea grape plant is often used in ocean-side landscaping in sandy soil right on the beach and it produces clusters of

fruit that resemble grapes. Are sea grapes edible? Yes, they are. Animals enjoy sea grapes and humans can eat them as well, and they are used to make jam. They contain very low calories and sugar, enabling good bacterium to digest food and excrete waste quickly which is effective in preventing constipation. Season: Sep-Oct.

Shimarucu



Maybe Aruba's most popular wild fruit tree. You may have noticed cars at the side of the road and people picking those red berries. Well, that's Shimarucu. The local habit to stop for these delicious fruits goes from generation to generation. Its fruit's degree of sour depends on the amount of rain it gets. Red Shimarucus tend to taste better than orange. The fruit has super power: a true vitamin bomb. Adults only need to eat 3-4 of these berries to meet their daily recommended amount of Vitamin C. Season: Rainy months (Oct-Jan).

Tamarind



A delicious, sweet fruit that has a wide variety of uses and applications, both for medicinal and culinary purposes. It is a medium-sized bushy tree with evergreen leaves and fruit that develops in pods characterized by long, brown shells. Inside is a sticky, fleshy, juicy pulp, which is the Tamarind fruit. Both sweet and sour in taste, the fruit contains a significant level of vitamin C, as well as vitamin E, B vitamins, calcium, iron, phosphorous, potassium, manganese, and dietary fiber. There are also a number of organic compounds that make tamarind a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. Season: March.

When it comes to veggies the island certainly offers a home-grown selection. They taste delicious and have their specific talents to boost your immune system. Start the day with a 'batida' (smoothie) enriched with a local veggie touch or select your restaurant that offers local vegetable dishes to get the real pure taste of it.

Comcomber chiquito

This is a sort of local squash, but looks like a cucumber with prickly skin. The taste however is bitterer than the cucumber and the vegetable is smaller in size but bigger in width. Inside is a soft, fleshy pulp and seeds, just like the cucumber. Comcomber chiquito is grown in the island and used in salads and 'stoba' (stew) or on its own in vinegar. The veggie contains multiple B vitamins, including vitamin B1, vitamin B5, and vitamin B7 (biotin). B vitamins are known to help ease feelings of anxiety and buffer some of the damaging effects of stress. Additionally this veggie is rich in two of the most basic elements needed for healthy digestion: water and fiber. Season: year-round.

Yambo

Family of Okra, also known as 'lady's fingers': a green flowering plant. Okra belongs to the same plant family as hibiscus and cotton. A classic favorite dish in Aruba is Sopi di yambo. It has long been favored as a food for the health-conscious. It contains potassium, vitamin B, vitamin C, folic acid, and calcium. It's low in calories and has a high dietary fiber content. Recently, a new benefit of including okra in your diet is being considered. Okra has been suggested to help manage blood sugar in cases of type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes. Season: year-round.

Bonch'i Cunucu

A long, small bean, boiled for a side dish or snack. Long beans have a chewy, crunchy texture—more so than snap beans—and a flavor reminiscent of the dry navy bean or asparagus. Besides stir-fry, soups and salads, the long bean is a good choice for stewing, braising (to remain chewy and firm), sautéing, shallow frying, and deep frying. With cooking, the long bean's bean flavor intensifies. Long beans are low in calories, about 45 calories per cup, and rich in vitamin A and also contain vitamin C and potassium. Season: year-round.

Pampuna



In the endless summer of Caribbean living we only have to concern ourselves with a wet season and a dry season. Still we do indulge heavily in the pleasures of pumpkin and enjoy Caribbean pumpkin recipes year round. A popular dish in Aruban restaurants is Sopa Di Pampuna, don't miss it. This dish is made of pumpkin soup, and parsley. Pumpkins are rich in flavonoid polyphenolic antioxidants such as xanthin, lutein and carotenes and also contain vitamins. Pumpkin seeds are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, minerals and proteins. Pumpkins are used to make desserts, breads and soups. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Went fast slip
 - 6 Violinist 40 Taking Stern advantage
 - 11 Overhead of
 - 12 Island 41 Lab work south of 42 Reason Sicily
 - 13 Thin DOWN
 - 14 Acts 1 Motley porridge 2 Wear
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 - 18 Commo- 5 Yummy tion
 - 19 Marching 6 Little terror beat
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 - 23 Portugal's 8 Reunion place
 - 24 Puts on 9 New York ice
 - 25 Stylized 10 Social Japanese drama
 - 27 Driving 25 Checkers aid
 - 30 Charles 26 View- Ill's house points
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 - 32 Director 28 Fred, Lee and Ethan
 - 33 Manly 29 Promise
 - 35 Cold 30 Jeans house measure
 - 38 Lubri- 34 Ascend cated 36 Stable bit
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GAUGE	BILLS	
EASE	ASEA	
ODDS	SITE	
BEE	OCTOPUS	
ONTAP	CRONE	
EYELASH	SUE	
CALI	DIMS	
PATS	PLOT	
ALIKE	UNITY	
NOVAS	MOVIE	
TEENS	PREEN	

Yesterday's answer

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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13					14				
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32				33		34			
35			36	37		38			
39						40			
41						42			

12-9

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-9

CRYPTOQUOTE

W'P WZ R LGGT FQRNV UWLSC

ZGE. ZGC VPGCWGZRQK —

W'P MYDC GZ UGQQVU

DARCVD. — YZAZGEZ

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: READ THE BOOKS THEY DON'T WANT YOU TO. THAT'S WHERE THE GOOD STUFF IS. — LEVAR BURTON

Millennial Money: What the 2024 Social Security COLA could mean for your retirement



In this Dec. 21, 2020, file photo people watch as the sun sets from the Presidio in San Francisco.

Associated Press

By DALIA RAMIREZ of Nerd-Wallet

Social Security benefits for millions of people will rise by an average of over \$50 a month starting in January, thanks to the Social Security Administration's 3.2% annual cost of living adjustment for 2024, announced on Oct. 12. The change will immediately put more money in current retirees' pockets, but it also could have a considerable effect on payouts to future retirees.

The 2024 increase is much smaller than last year's 8.7%, the largest since 1981. But because the COLA reflects inflation, a smaller increase is not necessarily a bad thing; it suggests that inflation is more stable and may help the Social Security Administration provide maximum benefits for longer.

The COLA has been relatively volatile in recent years, however, and future retirees are understand-

ably concerned about the health of the Social Security benefits program.

Here's what the cost of living adjustments really mean and how to factor Social Security benefits into your future retirement budget.

A LOWER COLA IS A GOOD SIGN

Though it's reasonable to assume that a lower cost of living adjustment is worse for Social Security recipients, it may also point to a healthier economy. The SSA increases the COLA in response to inflation, which means that a hefty COLA jump like last year's 8.7% reflects a serious bump in the costs of goods and services.

"The (Federal Reserve's) goal is for inflation to be 2% or lower, and therefore, the COLA increases by Social Security would be 2% or lower," says Randall Holcombe, a certified financial planner and director of wealth planning at Con-

fluence Financial Partners in Pittsburgh.

"If your costs aren't going up so much, then your Social Security isn't going up as much, but then again, you don't need Social Security to go up as much," he says.

Many financial planners incorporate a flat annual COLA into their clients' retirement plans. "I typically build in an inflation rate of around 3%," says Elaine Floyd, a certified financial planner and director of retirement and life planning at New York-based financial advisory firm Horseshoemouth LLC.

"We want to be conservative when we're projecting Social Security income," Floyd says. Even this year's increase may not be the most accurate predictor of what your benefits might look like decades in the future.

FOCUS ON WAGES

The COLA isn't the only annual change to Social Security benefit amounts. Yearly changes to the lesser-known national average wage index can also significantly impact current and future retirees.

The SSA applies the index to your 35 highest-earning years in the workforce as part of its benefits calculation.

"Wages tend to rise faster than prices," Floyd says. The most recent increase in the average wage index is 5.32%, more than the 3.2% COLA.

"I really want younger people to understand the connection between their own earnings and their eventual Social Security benefits," Floyd adds. She suggests thinking about that connection throughout your career, especially when making decisions about sabbaticals or job choices. "Your eventual benefits will reflect the rise in wages over your career," she says. "Ask for those raises." □

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24/7

Asteroid will pass in front of bright star Betelgeuse to produce a rare eclipse visible to millions

By **MARCIA DUNN AP**

Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.

(AP) — One of the biggest and brightest stars in the night sky will momentarily vanish as an asteroid passes in front of it to produce a one-of-a-kind eclipse.

The rare and fleeting spectacle, late Monday into early Tuesday, should be visible to millions of people along a narrow path stretching from central Asia's Tajikistan and Armenia, across Turkey, Greece, Italy and Spain, to Miami and the Florida Keys and finally, to parts of Mexico.

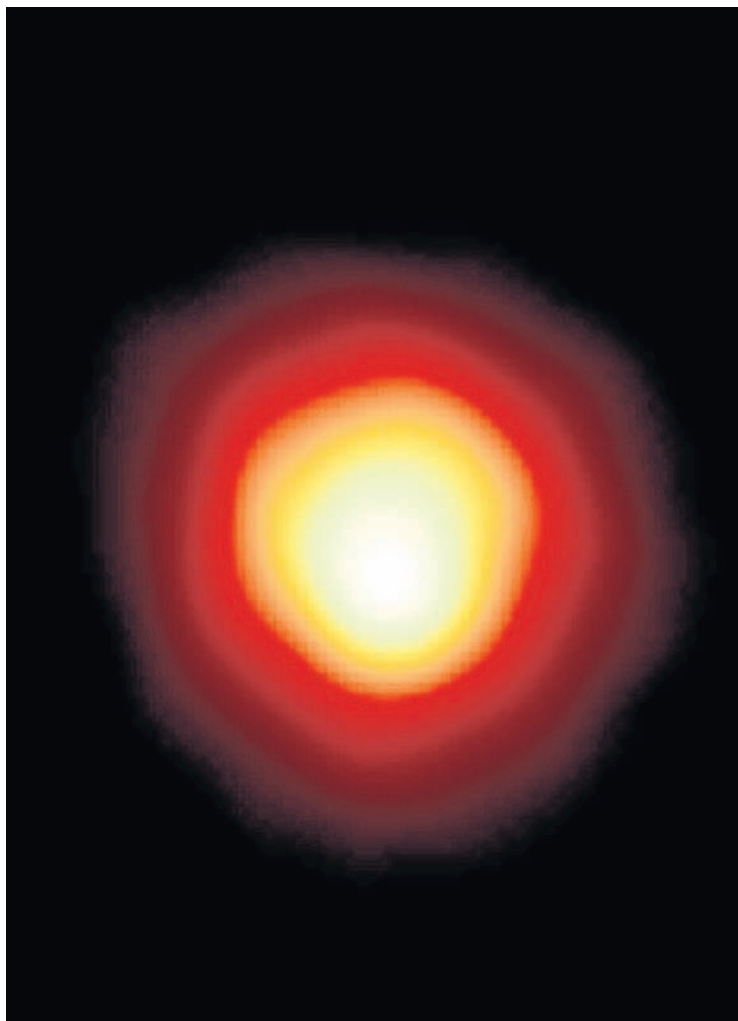
The star is Betelgeuse, a red supergiant in the constellation Orion. The asteroid is Leona, a slowly rotating, oblong space rock in the main asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter.

Astronomers hope to learn more about Betelgeuse and Leona through the eclipse, which is expected to last no more than 15 seconds. By observing an eclipse of a much dimmer star by Leona in September, a Spanish-led team recently estimated the asteroid to be about 34 miles wide and 50 miles long (55 kilometers wide and 80 kilometers long).

There are lingering uncertainties over those predictions as well as the size of the star and its expansive atmosphere. It's unclear if the asteroid will obscure the entire star, producing a total eclipse. Rather, the result could be a "ring of fire" eclipse with a miniscule blazing border around the star. If it's a total eclipse, astronomers aren't sure how many seconds the star will disappear completely, perhaps up to 10 seconds.

"Which scenario we will see is uncertain, making the event even more intriguing," said astronomer Gianluca Masi, founder of the Virtual Telescope Project, which will provide a live webcast from Italy.

An estimated 700 light-years away, Betelgeuse is



This image made with the Hubble Space Telescope and released by NASA on Aug. 10, 2020 shows the star Alpha Orionis, or Betelgeuse, a red supergiant.

Associated Press

visible with the naked eye. Binoculars and small telescopes will enhance the view. A light-year is 5.8 trillion miles.

Betelgeuse is thousands of times brighter than our sun and some 700 times big-

ger. It's so huge that if it replaced our sun, it would stretch beyond Jupiter, according to NASA.

At just 10 million years old, Betelgeuse is considerably younger than the 4.6 billion-year-old sun. Scientists

expect Betelgeuse to be short-lived, given its mass and the speed at which it's burning through its material.

After countless centuries of varying brightness, Betelgeuse dimmed dramatically in 2019 when a huge bunch of surface material was ejected into space. The resulting dust cloud temporarily blocked the starlight, NASA said, and within a half year, Betelgeuse was as bright as before.

Scientists expect Betelgeuse to go supernova in a violent explosion within 100,000 years. □



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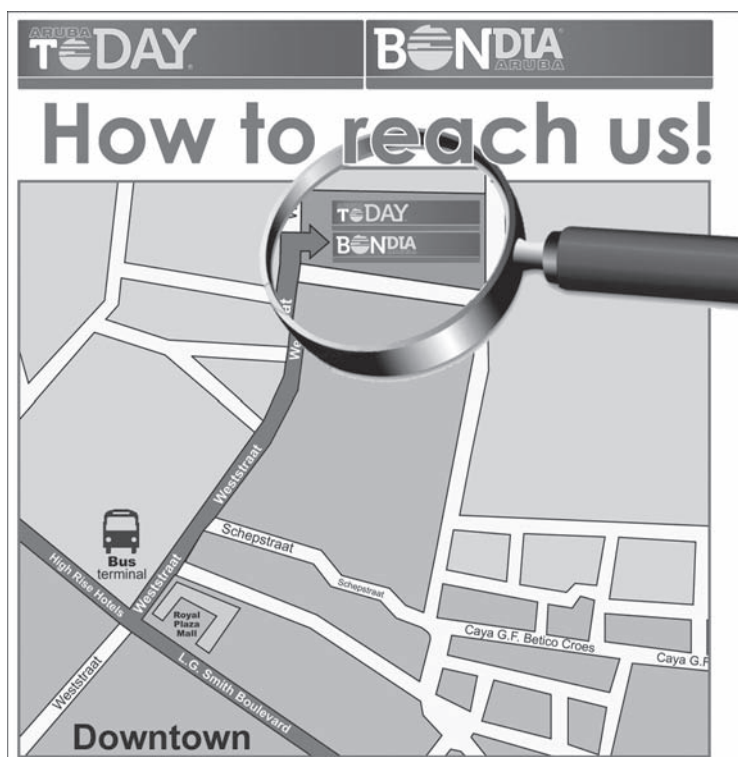
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Haliburton and Pacers to meet James and the Lakers for the NBA's In-Season Tournament title

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Tyrese Haliburton can change his own narrative on Saturday night. And LeBron James gets a chance to add yet another prize to his legacy. It's a game that doesn't count in the standings but still has a ton of money, a trophy, medals and bragging rights on the line. Haliburton and the Indiana Pacers will take on James and the Los Angeles Lakers on Saturday night in the championship game of the inaugural In-Season Tournament.

Both teams are 6-0 in the event.

The tournament was something that NBA Commissioner Adam Silver wanted for years, likening it to what's commonly done in top soccer leagues around the globe. James said the other major ideas on Silver's watch the bubble at Walt Disney World that finished the 2019-20 season in the early months of the pandemic on the way to the Lakers winning the title, and the play-in tournament both worked, and he has called the commissioner "a genius" for pulling the In-Season Tournament off.

"We've got to finish our breakfast on Saturday. That's the most important thing," James said. "But like I said, yeah, he's pretty good. I said Adam is a genius. He does a great job, for sure."

James has won four NBA titles and been to the NBA Finals 10 times. He is the NBA's career leading scorer and has a slew of accolades.

Haliburton is essentially just starting out; he was an All-Star last year, got a rookie max extension from the Pacers last summer that will be worth at least \$205 million and has emerged as perhaps this season's breakout star.

But after a loss in Miami last week, Haliburton said this to a handful of reporters at his locker: "Individual success is nothing at this point. I just want to win. I'm tired of be-



Indiana Pacers guard Tyrese Haliburton (0) yells after a play against the Milwaukee Bucks during the second half of a semifinal in the NBA basketball In-Season Tournament, Thursday, Dec. 7, 2023, in Las Vegas.

ing a loser. I've got to do a better job of finding ways to win. I've got to be better for us to win games. That's just plain and simple."

He had 27 points, 15 assists, seven rebounds and no turnovers in Indiana's semifinal win over Milwaukee in Las Vegas on Thursday. And while it's not an NBA title, Haliburton has a chance to win something big on Saturday night. "He's a great player," Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo said. "But to be able to have 25 points plus, 15 assists and not turning the ball over, which I had no idea about it, speaks a lot. Speaks volumes about the way he's playing this year."

AT STAKE

The Lakers-Pacers game won't count in the standings, since it'll essentially be the 83rd game in an 82-game season for both teams.

Players from both teams have clinched \$200,000 each for making the final;

two-way players get half that much.

Players on the winning team get \$500,000 apiece, so there's roughly \$4.5 million at stake in Saturday's game.

The winning team also gets the NBA Cup and all players from the championship team get medals.

QUOTABLE

Pacers coach Rick Carlisle: "We have a dream as an organization to be an NBA championship organization.

They won three ABA titles, and that's a big deal. Winning an NBA title is a dream that's reachable, but it's got to be a dream where people can focus on how it's reachable, and we're showing signs of that. We're not there yet. We're showing signs, and we're a dangerous team."

Lakers coach Darvin Ham after his team's 133-89 rout of New Orleans in a semifinal: "Everybody understands what we're playing for and what a great op-

portunity to be in here in this city and in this tournament for us to reveal our competitive spirit top to bottom."

QUIRKS

The tournament caused a couple of schedule quirks from the usual 41-home, 41-road game model.

The Pacers, Lakers and Bucks will all play 41 home and 40 road games this season, with one neutral-site contest (two, technically, for the Lakers and Pacers, though the Saturday game won't be in the standings).

The Pelicans will play 40 at home, 41 on the road and one neutral-site.

The New York Knicks will play 40 home games and 42 road games. The Knicks lost a quarterfinal in Milwaukee and got a road game in Boston on Friday to fill out their regular-season schedule.

In the NBA's official stats the Lakers and Bucks have 42 home and 40 road games (the Lakers were the

"home" team against the Pelicans), the Pacers have 41 of each (they were the "road" team against Milwaukee), and the Pelicans and Knicks are both listed with 40 at home and 42 on the road.

PACERS VS. LAKERS CAPSULE

Indiana Pacers (12-8, 6-0) vs. Los Angeles Lakers (14-9, 6-0), Saturday, 8:40 p.m. EST (ABC/ESPN2)

Line: Lakers by 4, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

Series this season: First meeting. The teams will play March 24 in Los Angeles and March 29 in Indianapolis.

Indiana tournament stat leaders: Tyrese Haliburton (27.8 ppg, 13.7 apg, 5.5 rpg, 1.3 spg), Myles Turner (20.2 ppg, 8.5 rpg, 2.7 bpg), Obi Toppin (15.8 ppg, .656 FG%), Buddy Hield (14.5 ppg, .500 3FG%), Bruce Brown (13.2 ppg, 1.7 spg).

Los Angeles Lakers tournament stat leaders: LeBron James (26.8 ppg, 8.2 apg, 7.5 rpg, 1.5 spg, .588 FG%, .625% 3FG%), Anthony Davis (20.3 ppg, 13.7 rpg), D'Angelo Russell (16.5 ppg, 5.7 apg, .547 FG%), Austin Reaves (15.7 ppg, 5.3 apg, 5.2 rpg), Rui Hachimura (11.3 ppg)

Outlook: The final is a clash of styles. Indiana is averaging a league-best 132.7 points in tournament games, the Lakers have given up a league-fewest 102 points per game in the tournament. ... The Pacers and Lakers played a pair of one-point games last season. Indiana won 116-115 at Los Angeles on Nov. 28, 2022, when Haliburton grabbed an offensive rebound and found Andrew Nembhard for a 3-pointer at the buzzer; the Lakers won 112-111 at Indianapolis on Feb. 2 when the Pacers' Buddy Hield missed a jumper at the end. ... The teams have split their last eight meetings, all decided by single digits.

Combined score of those eight games: Lakers 895, Pacers 890.

Associated Press

If a kicker once won the AP NFL MVP award, Tyreek Hill or another non-QB can win it

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Pro Football Writer

Tyreek Hill's record-breaking pace this season has led to a persistent question that's become a hot topic on debate shows.

Can Hill become the first wide receiver to win the AP NFL MVP award?

Mark Moseley was the Most Valuable Player in 1982, so if a kicker can win it, any player could. Well, maybe not a long snapper or punter.

Hill is making a strong case in a season where there's no clear frontrunner through the first 13 weeks. He has 1,481 yards receiving and 12 touchdowns for the AFC East-leading Miami Dolphins (9-3). Hill is on pace to break Calvin Johnson's single-season record for yards and become the first player to hit 2,000.

Still, he has the seventh-best MVP odds, according to FanDuel Sportsbook. Dak Prescott and Brock Purdy are tied for best odds. Jalen Hurts, Patrick Mahomes, Tua Tagovailoa and Lamar Jackson also are ahead of Hill.

Hill can't rack up those



Miami Dolphins wide receiver Tyreek Hill (10) celebrates after scoring against the Washington Commanders during the first half of an NFL football game Sunday, Dec. 3, 2023, in Landover, Md.
Associated Press

lofty stats if Tagovailoa isn't getting him the ball. Tagovailoa wouldn't have such gaudy numbers 3,457 yards, 24 TDs, 106.0 passer rating if Hill wasn't making all those sensational plays. "I think they're both tremendous players and my thing is I think they're tremendous players that can make plays on their own for

sure," Dolphins coach Mike McDaniels said. "But together, the important thing for this team is that you're seeing the best selves of both players while playing together. For me, I know they're elite players but working together they're finding that Tua's able to be super aggressive in certain windows because he

trusts what Tyreek's going to do.

"Tyreek's able to be super aggressive because he trusts Tua's field vision and knows that if he is putting the ball up in the air a little bit over the middle to just track it and catch it because Tua's not going to lead him in harm's way. The aggressiveness they

play with is very unique and their ability to make plays together that other people can't is the result of both of their numbers. They're independently awesome but together they're even better."

Quarterbacks have won the MVP award the last 10 seasons. In a league that's dependent on QBs, it makes sense the guys who handle the ball the most end up winning the award most often. Quarterbacks are the NFL's highest-paid players, by far. They're usually the most indispensable player on their team. They're going to get most of the credit when things go well and much of the blame when they lose.

Unlike Major League Baseball where players on losing teams have won the award quite a bit Shohei Ohtani and Mike Trout winning matters to NFL MVP voters.

The winner has been on a No. 1 seed eight of the last 10 years, including the previous six.

The MVP played for a No. 2 seed the other two times. □

Chiefs missing 4 starters, including top RB Isiah Pacheco, with Buffalo visiting on Sunday

By **DAVE SKRETTA**
AP Sports Writer
KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The Kansas City Chiefs will

be without four of their starters, including running back Isiah Pacheco and left tackle Donovan Smith



Kansas City Chiefs running back Isiah Pacheco (10) reacts to a run against the Green Bay Packers during the second half of an NFL football game Sunday, Dec. 3, 2023 in Green Bay, Wis.
Associated Press

on offense, when they play the Buffalo Bills on Sunday. The Chiefs also will be without linebacker Drue Tranquill and safety Bryan Cook, Chiefs coach Andy Reid said Friday.

Pacheco, who had off-season shoulder surgery, bruised the same shoulder and missed the entire week of practice. The league's fifth-leading rusher was coming off a big game, running 18 times for 110 yards and a score in a 27-19 loss to Green Bay.

Former first-round pick Clyde Edwards-Helaire, who has largely fallen out of favor in the Kansas City offense over the past two years, will start at running

back against Buffalo. Jerick McKinnon will be back from a groin injury and back him up while Deneric Prince is expected to be elevated from the practice squad to provide additional depth.

"(Edwards-Helaire) has been a really good mentor and leader in the room; it starts there. Then when he gets on the field, is given opportunities, he makes the most of it," Chiefs offensive coordinator Matt Nagy said this week. "The running back position gets hit quite a bit, so if you have an injury or you need a next-man-up, you want to have a guy like Clyde ready."

Smith hurt this neck against the Packers last Sunday.

Rookie lineman Wanya Morris will continue as his replacement.

"The guys that have been stepping in have played," Reid said.

"That's the positive part of it. It's not new territory for them."

The Chiefs expected to be without Cook, who severely sprained his ankle against the Packers, and Tranquill, who was placed in the concussion protocol. Mike Edwards and Chamarri Conner are next up at safety, and Kansas City hopes it can activate starting linebacker Nick Bolton off injured reserve after he logged a full week of practice. □

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